

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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July 27, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS, ELDERLY, AND DISABLED USING ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER (EBT) CARDS TO PURCHASE PREPARED MEALS (BOARD ORDER #38 - FEBRUARY 4, 2003)

This is to provide you with an update on the Restaurant Meals Program for Homeless, Elderly, and Disabled Food Stamp Participants using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards to purchase prepared meals. As you may recall, homeless, elderly, and disabled Food Stamp participants will be allowed to purchase prepared meals using their EBT cards at restaurants that have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County and have been certified by the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to accept Food Stamp benefits. We believe this program will be of great benefit to eligible households since the homeless do not have refrigerators to store food, and the elderly and disabled may have difficulty preparing meals for themselves.

On May 21, 2004, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) issued the regulations, which would allow us to submit a proposal to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program. In January 2005, our proposal package for the Restaurant Meals Program was submitted to CDSS for approval.

CDSS approved our proposal for the Restaurant Meals Program in March 2005. As a result, my staff has been working to identify potential restaurants throughout Los Angeles County for participation in the program and preparing for implementation. My Department has signed MOUs with 100 Subway Restaurants, whose certification is pending from FNS. El Pollo Loco Restaurants have expressed their interest in participating in the program and are expected to sign MOUs after resolving some internal issues. An informational mailer was sent on July 10, 2005 to 10,000 restaurants throughout Los Angeles County to solicit additional restaurants to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program. The restaurants were identified from the food services listings maintained by the Department of Health Services.

Program implementation will begin this week with Subway Restaurants. Subway is the only restaurant vendor with current certification from FNS. Additional restaurants will be added to the program in the coming months as a result of our restaurant mailer and as they are certified by FNS. Our goal is to provide a variety of nutritious meal choices to eligible participants throughout the County.

Current elderly and disabled Food Stamp participants will be mailed an informational flyer on the Restaurant Meals Program and a list of participating restaurants. Homeless participants will receive the flyer and restaurant list in DPSS district offices. Newly approved homeless, elderly, and disabled participants will also receive the flyer and restaurant list in the district offices. Updated restaurant listings will be mailed to eligible participants in the third and sixth month after implementation. The restaurant list will also be available on the Food Stamp webpage of the DPSS website. I will report to you on the progress of our Restaurant Meals Program Outreach efforts on a semi-annual basis.

BY:bs

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors